

Immunization Registry Progress in Maryland

Immunization Coverage in Maryland

Maryland calculates vaccine coverage rates by two methods: 1) The Maryland Retrospective School Survey; and 2) the CDC National Immunization Survey. The Maryland Retrospective survey assesses coverage rates of a sample of current kindergarteners for the 1999-2000 school year when these children were 24 months of age (approximately 1996).

The results of the Retrospective survey for the 4:3:1 series (4+DTP, 3+Polio, 1MMR) indicate that the coverage rate was 75%, a slight increase over last year's rate of 74%. The 1998/1999 National Immunization Survey revealed that the State's 4:3:1 coverage rate for children 19-35 months is 80.1%, not significantly different from the national average of 80.2%. Any disparities that exist between the Retrospective survey and the NIS may be due to the different methods used for data collection and the different birth cohorts sampled. The Center for Immunization remains committed to reaching the goal of 90% completion of the 4:3:1 series by two years of age.

Among the many achievements of the Maryland Center for Immunization over the past decade, 1999 was the first year that Maryland was completely measles-free. In 1990, there were 204 cases of measles reported in Maryland. Since that time, Maryland school children have been required to receive two doses of measles vaccine, resulting in no reported cases of measles in 1999.

In 1990, 47 cases of H. Influenzae (Hib), a potentially deadly form of meningitis, were reported in Maryland in children under five years of age. In 1999, only one case of this disease was registered in the State. In 1990, more than 1,100 cases of mumps were reported in the State. Maryland school children were required to have mumps vaccine starting in 1992. In 1999, there were only five cases of mumps reported in Maryland.

Other unique qualities about ImmuNet

Maryland has been working toward a statewide immunization registry since 1994. Maryland has twice contracted with registries companies for software and services, but both companies went out of business prior to delivering customized software. Many local communities, however, developed immunization registries during that time. Currently, eight population-based registries are operated by local county health departments. These registries are not linked, and therefore, do not exchange data electronically.

The Maryland statewide immunization registry program, known as ImmuNet, recently entered into a partnership with the Baltimore City Immunization Registry Program (BIRP) for redevelopment of the current BIRP software and expansion of the system statewide. BIRP was recently recognized as the most fully functional and advanced registry program among all of the All Kids Count demonstration projects. Software development will be jointly funded by both

projects and is being developed by a large international consulting firm. Both registry projects together partnered with the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and a leading registry consultant to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of Maryland physicians, parents, MCOs and communities to determine needs, requirements and concerns. A five-year strategic plan is under development and will be completed by May 15, 2000. Software development will commence in May 2000 and be completed early in 2001. The current partnerships will be maintained and expanded through a statewide immunization coalition.

Other registry plans, accomplishments, and successes

ImmuNet will create a backbone, along with Vital Records, for the Maryland Public Health Data Network (PHDN). The PHDN will be a comprehensive, integrate public health database to improve the quality of services provided and public planning for programs and services.

Maryland is currently receiving funds from CDC as part of the Information Networks for Public Health Officials (INPHO) project.

Some challenges and barriers affecting registry progress

- Two software vendors selected in the past (NiseWest and HumanSoft) have gone out of business causing delays in Maryland's registry development. We are confident that the partnership with the city of Baltimore will be of great benefit in the continued development of ImmuNet.
- Federal budget reductions and the end of AKC funding for Baltimore's project are barriers to overcome.

Current registry funding

While the Maryland Center for Immunization is confident that ImmuNet is poised for great success due to these recent partnerships, and believes that a statewide immunization registry, linked to other statewide registries, is the only way to ensure sustained high immunization coverage rates and low disease rates in the State, decreased Federal funding threatens this success. Neither the BIRP nor ImmuNet will receive additional funding beyond this year from the sources that have funded the projects thus far. Both projects are jointly and independently attempting to secure alternate funds to ensure our success. Without a stable source of funding, the stability of the project will be greatly undermined.

Helpful immunization and immunization registry contacts in Maryland

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